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·APRIL·

MAN SHARPENING HIS PEN
By Rembrandt

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"Often the man sat under the tree, and always its shade and the sweetness thereof stimulated in him the process of thought. But one day some persons came and cut the tree down and ground it up into pulp, of which they made books. And the reading of these, indispensable to culture in the accepted sense, left the man no time to think."—Puck.

To Mark Twain

[Read by Mr. William Dean Howells on Mark Twain's seventieth birthday.]

A traveler from the Old World, just escaped
  Our customs with his life, had found his way
To a place uptown where a Colossus shaped
  Itself, sky-scraper high, against the day.
A vast smile, dawning from its mighty lips,
  Like sunshine on its visage seemed to brood;
One eye winked in perpetual eclipse,
  In the other a huge tear of pity stood.
Wisdom in chunks about its temples shone;
  Its measureless bulk grotesque exultant rose;
And while Titanic puissance clothed it on,
  Patience with foreigners was in its pose,
So that, "What art thou?" the emboldened traveler spoke,
And it replied, "I am the American joke.

"I am the joke that laughs the proud to scorn;
  I mock at cruelty, I banish care,
I cheer the lowly, chipper the forlorn,
  I bid the oppressor and hypocrite beware,
I tell the tale that makes men cry for joy;
  I bring the laugh that has no hate in it;
In the heart of age I wake the undying boy;
  My big stick blossoms with a thornless wit.
The lame dance with delight in me; my mirth
  Reaches the deaf untrumpeted; the blind
My point can see. I jolly the whole earth,
  But most I love to jolly my own kind.
Joke of a people great, gay, bold, and free,
I type their master-mood. Mark Twain made me."

W. Stanton Howard says of Tarbell in the April Harper's: "To one devoted to the sedate masters of the past—Titian, Rembrandt, or Van Dyck—Mr. Tarbell's distinctly modern point of view seems prankish and full of irony, yet he is as much a child of his age as they were of theirs. While his artistry is of the most remarkable kind, it is not easy to find the right word to fix his personality. He may, perhaps, be best described by the French term *un cerebral*, by which they mean, not an intellectual painter, but rather one who feels through his brain. He is sensitive to impressions of externals, which he records with much subtlety. True to his country and age, he is absorbed in the technical problems of his art, upon which he has a complete grasp. His deficiency is in imagination and poetic feeling, and his work gives evidence of having been well thought out, rather than to have been inspired by any flights of imagination. He sees everything, and his brush expresses his personal vision, but, with all his mastery of means, his is the art of culture rather than of creation. He is the lyricist rather than the psychologist, and does not ask art, camel-like, to bear the burdens of philosophy. His style is brilliant, nervous, flexible, with a joy in life and some of the rapture of youth. . . . These young creatures which he is fond of portraying depart

from classic lines, but they are nearer life, and show freedom from theatric device. Furthermore, we are indebted to the newer group of American painters, to which Mr. Tarbell belongs, for having rescued us from the anecdotic blight which so long held our art under its spell, revealing for us a delectable region in which a more intellectual air may be breathed."

The Literary Digest publishes every week a department, "Letters and Art," which contains considerable valuable information on current events in the "artistic" world. Lately it has been printing a good deal about Rodin. The number for October 30 contains an editorial on "Rodin as a Reactionary," and later, April 2, they publish an exceedingly interesting interview with Rodin himself. The great man says:—

"In the realm of realities, people regard as ugly everything that is deformed and diseased and that suggests sickness, weakness, and suffering. They regard as ugly everything that defies regularity, which is to them the symbol and condition of health and strength. A hump is ugly, bow-legs are ugly, misery in rags is ugly. Ugly, again, are the soul and conduct of the immoral, the vicious, the criminal man, the abnormal man, who is an enemy of society; ugly is the soul of the parricide, the traitor, the unscrupulous slave of ambition. And it is right that the lives and objects of which we can expect only evil should be given an odious epithet.

"But when a great artist or a great writer lays hold upon either sort of ugliness, he transfigures it instantaneously. With a touch from the magic ring he metamorphoses it into beauty. His is a sort of fairy alchemy.

"In art a thing is beautiful whenever it has character. Character—this is the intense truth of any natural spectacle, whether beautiful or ugly. You may even call it a double truth.

For it is the inner essence expressed by the outward appearance. It is the soul, the sentiment, the idea that shines out through the features of a face, the pose and action of a human body, the tones of a sky, the line of a horizon.

"Now, to the great artist everything in nature affords character. For his observation penetrates to its hidden meaning. And what people call ugly is oftener fuller of character than what people call beautiful, because the inner truth comes out more forcibly through ugliness than through regularity. And since it is only the power of character that yields beauty in art, it comes about that often what is ugliest in nature is most beautiful in art.

"Nothing can be ugly in art except what is without character—that is to say, affording no outer or inner truth. The ugly things in art are those that are false, artificial, trying to be pretty instead of expressive, things that are affected and 'precious,' smiling without motive, arranged without purpose, things without soul, without truth, things that tell lies because merely producing a parade of beauty and grace."

Charles H. Caffin tries to explain the Benson girl type in this wise: "As he has interpreted it, the type has something of the character of a fine-blooded race-horse, long in its lines, clean-cut, spare of flesh, the bone and muscle felt beneath it, movement throughout accentuated—unmistakable signs of pedigree. Psychologically, also, the type is a product of intensive breeding—a cross between the exacting narrowness of

Puritanism and the spiritual sensuousness and freedom of Emerson; a transcendentalism of morals and imagination, blended with a little of the questioning and unrest of modern thought. It is, indeed, a new type; strenuous with a sense of inherited responsibilities, but still having a certain air of self-compelling restraint, as if it held itself back a little in view of possibilities scarcely yet realized."

In the April Scribner's we find an interesting article on Carroll Beckwith, founder of the Art Students' League of New York. This is the manner in which he drove home the foundations of the work:—

"Bad proportions and feeble construction can never be improved by laborious polishing with rubber and stump. Throw these away. A sheet of Ingres paper, a stick of charcoal, your fingers, and a pellet of bread are all the materials needed. Now learn to see right; exact proportions, first of all, then construct your figure with a few simple lines, divide your light and shade into two or three tones, and make a fresh study on this basis every day.

"Many men, famous in American art to-day, thinking back, must acknowledge that this earnest teaching laid the foundation for subsequent success."

"If thou of fortune be bereft,
And in thy store there be but left
Two loaves, sell one, and with the dole
Buy hyacinths to feed thy soul."

We are indebted to Miss Sophie Fischer for the translation of the following bit of interesting information from a German newspaper:—

THE AMERICAN EXHIBITION IN THE EYES OF THE CRITIC.

"The American art exhibition, which was opened in the Höruglichen Alsademie der Hünste, Berlin, on Thursday, March 17, in the presence of the crown prince, who represented the emperor, aroused general curiosity, and receives for that reason a very active attendance. The exhibition closes at the end of April. The pictures go to Munich, where they likewise will be exhibited for several weeks.

"The art critics continue with their criticisms, which sound in general most favorable. But the given praise receives in one point a limitation. The European foundation of the American art of painting is pronounced, and the failure of a national element of the American people is emphasized.

"The Leipziger Neuesten Nachrichten makes an exception in its judgment. The paper denotes the character of the exhibition as feminine, external, lacking depth, polished and trim. And it further states that one cannot say that the exhibition teaches anything whatsoever. The exhibition is therefore entirely superfluous.

"In contrast to this pre-judged criticism, celebrated artists, as Skarbina, Kampf, and Schaper, have expressed themselves enthusiastic over the American exhibition."

The Ballad of the Comforting

Mary smiled on her little Son,
"Now why hast Thou left Thy play?"
"But to touch thy hands with my hands, Mother,
Lest some time there come a day
When I may not close them within my own,
Tho' they fall as hurt doves may."

Mary smiled on her little Son,
"Now blind would'st thou have me go,
That mine eyes thou hast closed with kisses twain?"
"Nay, Mother, I may not know,
But I fear a day when they look on pain,
And I may not close them so."

Mary smiled on her little Son,
Close, close in her arms pressed He.
"Oh, Mother, my Mother, my heart on thine,
Lest some time a day may be
When I may not comfort or make it whole,
Tho' it break for the love of me."

Now think you that by Calvary's hill,
Whereon her Son was slain,
She felt upon her eyes that touch
That veiled them unto pain,
And filled her groping hands, and bade
Her torn heart beat again?

Theodosia Garrison.

The Feet of the Young Men

Who hath seen the beaver busied? Who hath watched the
black-tail mating?
Who hath lain alone to hear the wild goose cry?
Who hath worked the chosen water where the ouananiche is
waiting,
Or the sea-trout's jumping crazy for the fly?

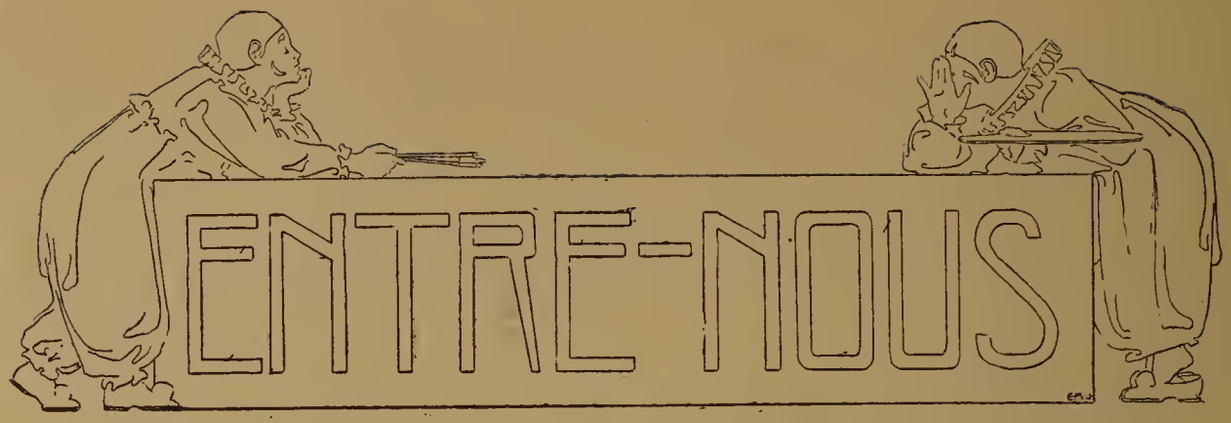
* * * * * * *

Who hath smelt wood smoke at twilight? Who hath heard
the birch log burning?
Who is quick to read the voices of the night?

* * * * * * *

Do you know that blackened timber—do you know that racing
stream,
With the raw, right-angled log-jam at the end,
And the bar of sun-warmed shingle where a man may bask and
dream,
To the click of shod canoe poles 'round the bend?
It is there that we are going, with our rods, and reels, and
traces,
To a silent, smoky Indian that we know—
To a couch of new-pulled hemlock, with the starlight on our
faces,
For the Red Gods call us and we must go!
And we go—go—go away from here,
On the other side the world we're overdue,
'S end the road is clear before you, when the old spring-fret
comes o'er you,
And the Red Gods call for you!

—Rudyard Kipling.



Certain people with a mania for collecting statistics, having turned everything into figures from the religions of the world to the germs carried about on a copper cent, are at present wildly endeavoring to find out what books girls really like best. Their discoveries so far, if representative, are hopelessly depressing. Collier's Weekly says, concerning the Wellesley students: "Almost every girl reads some monthly, but most often for the stories. A few read scientific magazines, and almost none any French or German periodicals. They are strong on short stories, and read many novels, a large part of them froth. A fifth of the number read Scott and Dickens, Thackeray and Jane Austen. Kipling and Stevenson are called favorite authors. One hundred and twenty confessed to reading poetry for pleasure. Tennyson is the favorite, Wordsworth, Browning, and Kipling following."

In the Independent Magazine we find the following cheerful information in an article on American colleges in general: "The librarians and professors whom I consulted generally asserted that the boys read nothing but the required books and talk nothing but athletics. The news-stand men whom I consulted told me that the Ladies' Home Journal and the Saturday Evening Post were most popular. In the week at my disposal I could not get the confidence of enough of the students to form any reliable conclusion as to the prevailing lit-

erary taste. Still I managed to get access to one or more coteries of genuine book-lovers in each institution, and from them made out the following list of favorite authors: Kipling, Stevenson, O. Henry, H. G. Wells, Jack London, Shaw, Chesterton, Churchill, George Ade, W. J. Locke, F. Hopkinson Smith, and Frank Norris."

The dear man who wrote this for the Independent,—I cannot remember his name,—seemed wonderfully cheered by his final discoveries, and after the "young ladies'" list it is positively exciting. Scott, Dickens, Jane Austen, Tennyson,—they're all right, of course. Read them, by all means, dear little girls, especially Jane Austen. She is charming, I know. Her heroines are such gentle, retiring, ineffectual young things, with sweet, meek faces, and demure little ringlets that might possibly come undone, dear me, if they should by chance do anything! And this, of course, is the type of female our progressive modern colleges are aiming to turn out. This is the mental food whereon these splendid up-to-date young women are nourished who are doing such wonderful things nowadays. In the words of Ernest L. Major, "Bah!"

As you can see, I'm frightfully worked up about it, and of course have spluttered to the Lamp-post. He doesn't consider it important in the least, and states that the things they eat are much worse than the things they read.

A PHONETIC DIAGNOSIS OF A CASE OF SPRING FEVER.

The squilgy spring has flopped me with its breath,
  That swoons and swuffs across the blinting bay,
I am kerflopped from life to effish death,
  And mooger droodie drawdle all the day.

All barpled burls the air athwart my sight,
  And fumid oolies froglify my brain,
Swyming in awlic eems that fly askite,
  To frazzle veemly toward my head again.

Then glupic glugness klugs the scrooge,
  And I enguffle ikkik till I fairly gaw,
All swulty is the air, though I am dry,
  And spug the gump nugs on the crappit spaw.

Not guilty! Not guilty! The chap who did it, whoever he was, was afraid to own up. Let me advise you seriously not to try to learn it. I did, and was sick as death for two weeks immediately after.

I sent the Lamp-post to an exhibition the other day with the noble intention of educating him. I failed or the exhibition failed to do anything of the kind. "Did you like it?" I asked. "I don't know," he answered meekly. He seemed strangely bowed. "I don't know. I had no chance to enjoy the pictures. There were quite a number of art students there." "Oh, a big crowd?" I asked. "No, not so many, six or eight, I should judge. They were mostly girls, and do you know"—his voice sank to a whisper—"they were so awfully queer that really they spoiled the pictures. There was something about their hair—I don't know—and the boys, too, were odd, quite odd. There didn't seem to be any the right size, somehow. They were either very long, with small heads and great big hands and feet, or else they seemed all sunk in and—well, squashed, sort of. They had a way of all getting up close to a picture in a bunch, and wiggling their noses up and down like so many rabbits, and jabbering and jabbering. Uncanny, I call it." He shiv-

ered. "They said all the pictures were 'wooden,' and some of them 'impossible,' and they'd all get in the middle of the room and squabble about the color of the reflected lights, and they none of them liked the pictures. None of them!" The Lamp-post's voice was a low wail now. "Do you suppose that any of them will paint any pictures ever?" he asked ominously. There was little doubt in his tones, only a great fear.

Were you in the country for your spring vacation? It's hard not to be allowed one's enthusiasms, but this is a staid and sober magazine, and I mustn't. I just wanted to say on the quiet, wasn't it wonderful? Were you where there were any little downy yellow puffs of chickens just out of their shells? Were you where there was a flock of white turkeys with bright red combs, and the most enormous of cross white gobblers? Were you where there was a little brand new black calf, all wobbly on his legs, or where they made golden butter in a churn, or where you could see, really *see* the lilac buds just cramming themselves open? Wasn't it wonderful? And wasn't it wonderful to rake up the leaves on the lawn, and plant as much as a whole row of potatoes, and get the eggs in a basket from the hen-house? And sleep long nights out of doors, and count the falling stars, with everybody else quite out of existence in the stuffy old house, and wasn't it wonderful to be waked up in the morning by the white collie licking your cheek, and find the world one soft pink glow all ready for the sun—wasn't it wonderful? And the bowl of cream and brown bread out under the trees, and—oh, stop! stop! or this department will spill all over into the advertisements, and the poor, meek editor won't have any space at all.

Frances Downes.

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